

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7363
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT ELAB SP VT

SUBJECT: FURTHER CHURCH-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) MADRID 6490; (B) MADRID 6843

1. SUMMARY. SIGNIFICANT RECENT CHURCH-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDE: (1) HOLDING OF BISHOPS CONFERENCE THIS WEEK IN CHARGED ATMOSPHERE RESULTING FROM RECENT CHURCH-RELATED PROTEST ACTIVITIES; (2) SUDDEN TRANSFER OF SIX PRIESTS FROM MADRID'S CARABANCHEL PRISON HOSPITAL TO SPECIAL PRIESTS PRISON IN ZAMORA AND RENEWAL OF THEIR HUNGER STRIKE, THUS NULLIFYING CONCILIATORY EFFECT OF PREVIOUS GOS TRANSFER THESE PRIESTS FROM ZAMORA TO MADRID; (3) REPORTED STIFF GOS PROTEST TO VATICAN RE BEHAVIOR OF PAPAL NUNCIO DURING RECENT PROTESTS AND PARTICULARLY DURING NUNCIATURA SIT-IN; (4) ALLEGED DISCUSSION SZIIWJHFOC HNET#MEETING OF POSSIBILITY GOS DECLARING NUNCIO DADAGLIO PERSONA NON GRATA, OR OF SEEKING HAVE VATICAN TRANSFER HIM; (5) CONTINUED PROTEST ACTIVITIES RELATING TO BARCELONA OPPOSITION DETAINEES; AND (6) DETERIORATION OF CLIMATE FOR RENEWED CONCORDAT NEGOTIATIONS WHICH APPEARED PROMISING ONLY THREE WEEKS AGO. END SUMMARY

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2. ON NOVEMBER 26, 19TH PLENARY SPANISH BISHOPS CONFERENCE, WHICH WILL CONTINUE THROUGH DECEMBER 1, WAS INAUGURATED. 75 SPANISH BISHOPS ALONG WITH PAPAL NUNCIO LUIGI DADAGLIO ATTENDED INAUGURAL SESSION. CONFERENCE'S PRINCIPAL AGENDA

ITEM IS "THE GOSPEL IN THE WORLD TODAY." HOWEVER, RECENT CHURCH-RELATED PROTESTS (REF B) HAVE HEATED UP CONFERENCE CLIMATE AND FOCUSED BISHOPS' ATTENTION ON THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND ON PENDING CONCORDAT NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS UNCERTAIN, HOWEVER, WHETHER CONFERENCE AS A WHOLE WILL ISSUE ANY PUBLIC DECLARATIONS ON THESE CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS.

3. INAUGURAL SESSION WAS OPENED WITH WELL-RECEIVED SPEECH BY CONFERENCE'S PRESIDENT, MADRID CARDINAL TARANCON, WHO ISSUED AN APPEAL FOR RECONCILIATION, DIALOGUE, AND COMPREHENSION. SUBSEQUENTLY PAPAL NUNCIO ADDRESSED CONFERENCE, MAKING REFERENCE TO "RECENT GRAVE EVENTS" WHICH HE STATED HE WOULD PREFER "NOT TO SPEAK ABOUT". NUNCIO ADDED THAT AT ALL TIMES HE HAD BEHAVED CORRECTLY "AS A PRIEST, AS A BISHOP, AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE POPE, AND AS A FRIEND OF SPAIN". THESE WORDS EARNED DADAGLIO A STANDING OVATION.

4. BISHOPS' APPLAUSE FOR NUNCIO IS LARGEY RELATED TO DADAGLIO'S ROLE IN RECENT EVENTS, PARTICULARLY TO THE NOVEMBER 10-11 MASS SIT-IN AT THE VATICAN NUNCIATURA IN MADRID (REF B). WHEN THE NUNCIATURA SIT-IN OCCURRED, DADAGLIO, INSTEAD OF ASKING PROTESTERS TO LEAVE OR OF CALLING POLICE TO EVICT THEM, ALLOWED THEM TO REMAIN IN THE NUNCIATURA FOR 21 HOURS, LISTENED SYMPATHETICALLY TO THEIR COMPLAINTS, ORDERED POLICE WHO HAD ENTERED THE NUNCIATURA GARDEN OFF PREMISES, AND CALLED IN THREE MADRID AUXILIARY BISHOPS WHO SUBSEQUENTLY ESCORTED THEM OUT OF NUNCIATURA THUS PROTECTING THEM FROM ARREST BY POLICE WHO HAD SURROUNDED COMPOUND. OVATION FOR NUNCIO WAS ALSO BECAUSE DADAGLIO IS CONSIDERED MORE PARTIAL TO VIEWPOINT OF SPANISH EPISCOPATE RE CONCORDAT THAN CERTAIN HIGH VATICAN OFFICIALS SUCH AS MSGR. CASAROLI, WHO RECENTLY VISITED MADRID TO DISCUSS RECOMMENCING CONCORDAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH FONMIN LOPEZ-RODO (REF A). CASAROLI'S CONFIDENTIAL

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VISIT WAS VIEWED BY SOME IN EPISCOPATE AS DELIBERATE VATICAN SNUB TO DADAGLIO, WHO IN PREVIOUS YEARS HAD LARGEY CONDUCTED CONCORDAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOS. THUS CONFERENCE APPEARED TO BE PUBLICLY MANIFESTING ITS SUPPORT OF NUNCIO.

5. GOS IS REPORTEDLY ANGRY AT DADAGLIO FOR HIS RECENT ROLE, PARTICULARLY FOR HAVING HARBORED THE SIT-IN PROTESTERS AT NUNCIATURA. ONE JESUIT SOURCE TOLD EMB LABATT THAT A HEATED DEBATE OF WHOLE CHURCH-RELATED PROTESTS AND CONCORDAT ISSUES TOOK PLACE AT MOST RECENT CABINET MEETING NOVEMBER 23, AND THAT SOME CABINET MEMBERS INCLUDING JUSTICE MINISTER RUIZ JARABO PROPOSED PAPAL NUNCIO BE DECLARED PERSONA NON GRATA, A PROPOSAL WHICH

WAS OVERRULED. AFTER CABINET MEETING, INFORMATION MINISTER LINAN INFORMED PRESS GOS HAD SENT NOTE OF PROTEST TO VATICAN RE ROLE OF NUNCIO IN NUNCIATURA SIT-IN. ALTHOUGH TEXT OF GOS PROTEST TO VATICAN NOT DISCLOSED, IT REPORTEDLY WAS MADE IN RATHER STRONG LANGUAGE. THESE DEVELOPMENTS COULD AGAIN THROW GOS-VATICAN RELATIONS ON UNCERTAIN COURSE. ANOTHER VERSION HAS IT GOS HAS ASKED VATICAN TO TRANSFER NUNCIO AND THAT VATICAN MAY HAVE AGREED, SUBJECT TO EFFECTING TRANSFER A FEW MONTHS HENCE WHEN CURRENT FUROR HAS DIED DOWN. (IF TRUE, SUCH A TRANSFER WOULD AGGRAVATE RELATIONS BETWEEN SPANISH BISHOPS AND HOLY SEE.)

6. MEANWHILE, SIX ZAMORA PRIESTS WHO HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO MADRID'S CARABANCHEL PRISON HOSPITAL ON NOVEMBER 18 IN AN APPARENT CONCESSION BY GOS AFTER THEIR LONG HUNGER STRIKE (REF B), WERE UNEXPECTEDLY RETURNED TO THE SPECIAL ZAMORA PRIESTS PRISON ON NOVEMBER 26, WHERE THEY REPORTEDLY PROMPTLY BEGAN A SECOND PROTEST HUNGER STRIKE. THEIR TRANSFER BACK TO ZAMORA FOLLOWED A CONFUSING SEQUENCE OF EVENTS REFLECTING GOS VACILLATION AND INCLUDING (1) AN EFFORT BY BISHOP ANOVEROS OF BILBAO TO VISIT THEM IN CARABANCHEL ON NOVEMBER 20 ONLY TO BE REFUSED ADMISSION AT THE PRISON GATE; (2) AN URGENT MEETING OF ANOVEROS WITH MINISTER OF JUSTICE ON SAME DATE TO SEEK PERMISSION TO VISIT THE PRIESTS, WHICH REQUEST WAS ALSO DENIED; (3) AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT SIX PRIESTS WERE RECOVERING SATISFACTORILY FROM THEIR HUNGER STRIKE AND WOULD SOON

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BE PLACED IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR 80 DAYS AT CARABANCHEL AS PUNISHMENT FOR THEIR ACTIONS; (4) THE NOVEMBER 23 CABINET MEETING; AND (5) THE SUDDEN GOS REVERSAL REPRESENTED BY THEIR TRANSFER BACK TO ZAMORA.

7. TRANSFER OF PRIESTS BACK TO ZAMORA AND RENEWED HUNGER STRIKE ON EVE OF BISHOPS CONFERENCE IS LIKELY PRECIPITATE RENEWED PROTESTS, AND INCREASES POSSIBILITY CONFERENCE MIGHT PRONOUNCE ITSELF PUBLICLY ON THIS ISSUE. REPORTEDLY CONFERENCE HAS ALREADY LISTENED BEHIND CLOSED DOORS TO HIGHLY CRITICAL REPORT BY BISHOP ANOVEROS ON ZAMORA PRIESTS, AFTER WHICH ASSEMBLED BISHOPS REPORTEDLY VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY AGAINST CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF SPECIAL PRIESTS JAIL UNDER CONCORDAT.

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED, WILL BE SERVICED UPON REQUEST

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 OMB-01 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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8. MEANWHILE, SEPARATE ISSUE OF 113 OPPONENTISTS ARRESTED IN BARCELONA OCTOBER 28 WHILE IN A CHURCH PARISH HALL ALSO REFLECTS EQUIVOCAL ACTIONS BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES. IN RECENT DAYS AUTHORITIES FINALLY ALLOWED SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER THESE DETAINEES FREE ON PROVISIONAL LIBERTY, BUT BEGAN TO REARREST SEVERAL OF THEM LATER IN SAME DAY ON GROUNDS THEY HAD NOT PAID SUBSTANTIAL FINES IMPOSED. SOME REPORTEDLY ARE STILL IN JAIL. BARCELONA ARRESTS ALSO CONTINUE TO BE IRRITANT IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS, AND CONTINUE TO PROMPT PROTESTS, SUCH AS RECENT PASTORAL LETTER HIGHLY CRITICAL OF GOS BY BISHOP OF GERONA ALONG LINES OF CARDINAL JUBANY'S EARLIER PASTORAL LETTER CALLING FOR BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS (REF B) AND PETITION TO PRESIDENT CARRERO BLANCO ON BEHALF OF DETAINEES SIGNED BY SEVERAL HUNDRED BARCELONA INTELLECTUALS AND PROMINENT ARTISTIC PERSONALITIES.

9. IT PREMATURE JUDGE WHAT EFFECT THESE VARIOUS PROTESTS AND DEVELOPMENTS WILL HAVE UPON RENEWED CONCORDAT NEGOTIATIONS. THERE NO DOUBT GOS, PARTICULARLY LOPEZ-RODO WHOSE PERSONAL PRESTIGE IS INVOLVED, IS ANXIOUS TO PROCEED WITH RENEWED NEGOTIATIONS FOR A NEW OR REVISED CONCORDAT. NONETHELESS GOS' RECENT ACTIONS, NOTABLY STIFF PROTEST TO NUNCIATURA AND REVERSION TO HARD LINE STANCE

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ON ZAMORA PRIESTS, IS BOUND TO WORSEN NEGOTIATING CLIMATE, WHICH DURING CASAROLI'S VISIT THREE WEEKS AGO APPEARED SO PROMISING.

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